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# Russian Cosmism: A Foretaste of Revolution

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The universe is at once life and death, destruction and creation, change and stability, tumult and repose. It is endlessly made and unmade, forever the same, with beings that are forever renewed. In spite of its perpetual development or becoming [*devenir*], its engravings are cast in bronze and incessantly print out the same page. Both as a whole and in detail, it is eternally transformation and immanence.  
– Louis-Auguste Blanqui, *Eternity by the Stars*, 1872<sup>1</sup>

Louis-Auguste Blanqui, president-elect of the communards, ironically spent the entire period of the Paris Commune in a prison at sea. On his brief release in May 1871, the uncompromisingly militant French revolutionary and true man of action began turning his prison notes into a book called *Eternity by the Stars*. This peculiar and largely underappreciated exercise in cosmology also represents a creative attempt to seek the universal premises of political optimism – a purely secular “principle of hope” (to borrow from Bloch), which is inextricable from any emancipatory project. “At the castle of the Bull, reduced to his potential,” writes Blanqui’s twenty-first-century translator Frank Chouraqui, “a man of action could only be left to his own musings on the falsity of the difference between potential and action.”<sup>2</sup> Blanqui’s text was published on February 20, 1872, “three days after Blanqui was sentenced to life in prison by a Versailles Tribunal.”<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the philosophy of Russian cosmism had just begun to emerge by way of its founding father, Nikolai Fedorov.

Fedorov and his ideas had a tremendous and well-established effect on the intellectual life and culture of prerevolutionary Russia. Although the nineteenth-century philosopher and librarian’s political beliefs may appear contradictory, unsatisfactory, and at odds with the revolutionary movement that emerged in his country at the beginning of the twentieth, his meditations on social order betray a strong inclination for radical change and arguably foster a demand for universal freedom. In this case, Fedorov’s arguments for immortality and space exploration could be treated not as a set of prescriptions for “ethical life,” but rather as a symptomatic critical response to the social and political circumstances of late modernity.

Russian cosmism was conceived in the seething atmosphere of fin de siècle Russia, an era possessed by the dual Dostoevsky-esque demons of political radicalism and insoluble moral dilemmas. The religious philosophy of brotherhood and resurrection came into gradual



Pattern design on the endleaf of Louis-Auguste Blanqui's *Eternity by the Stars* (1872).

being as a corpus of works written by Fedorov, none of which were published in his lifetime, but all of which triggered further written and published probings in cosmist territory. This article will focus upon critical aspects of Fedorov's thought, his views on justice and equality, and his concept of history. This formation of a world of thought was synchronized with a period of ultimate social unrest and political turbulence, culminating in the fall of czarism and the October Revolution of 1917. Revisiting Fedorov's cosmist legacy today through the theoretical lens of revolutionary politics implies a hermeneutic exercise in interrogating the different meanings of the idea of a "resurrection for all," the cornerstone idea of Fedorov's project of the "common task." Moreover, reading Fedorov in a revolutionary light suggests situating his thought within a conceptual matrix of questions that may even seem irrelevant to the religious strand of the Russian cosmism that the philosopher spent his life developing. Well after Fedorov's death in 1903, theorists of revolutionary practice, activists, and members of the First and Second Internationals wrestled with certain fundamental questions: theory versus practice, spontaneity versus organization, the power of collectivity, and how to act in accordance with history. While the October Revolution itself seemed to be an answer and a drastic solution to such problems, many of them of course remain with us today. So, following the centenary of the Revolution, it makes sense to rethink these questions, addressing them to each and every person with a stake in "radical thought" and action – Fedorov included.

### The Relationship between Theory and Practice

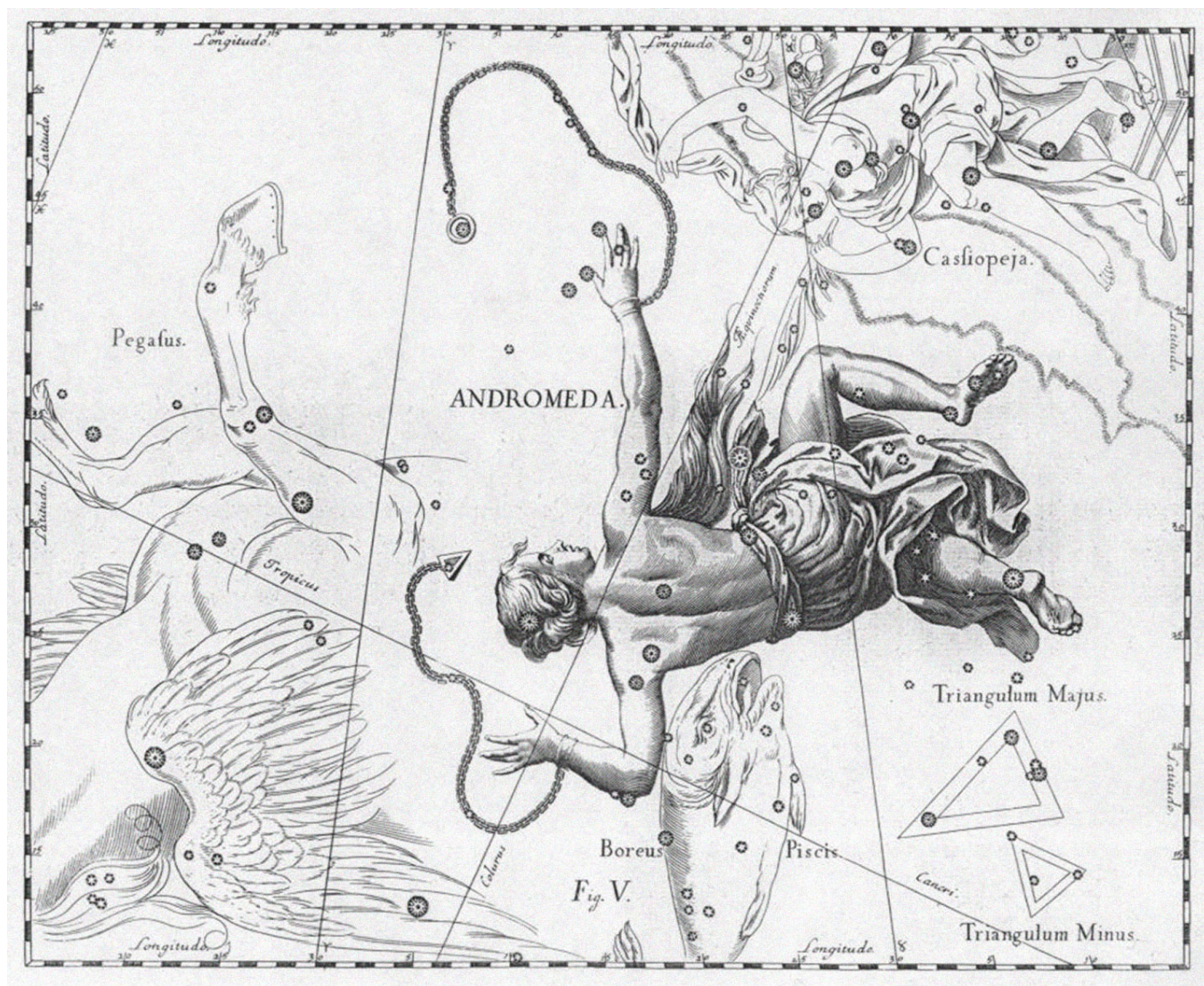
Marx famously diagnosed the problem of the relationship between philosophy and action in his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach. The dichotomy later reappeared in vastly different philosophical enterprises – ranging from Bakhtin's phenomenological "philosophy of the act" to the "philosophy of praxis" coined by Antonio Labriola and developed by Antonio Gramsci. The rupture or imbalance between speculation and social reality, thinking and doing, philosophy and action, preoccupied them all. In the present world of creative economies, cognitive labor, and popular science, it is tempting to believe that we are finally witnessing hybrid forms of theory and practice, produced and shared by everyone living today in the information-driven world. And yet, the ideas subtending both the principles and the purposes of technological development and contemporary politics are singled out as confidential assets, remaining a subject of state

secrecy or intellectual property – that is, of the "arcane knowledge" of a few.

Surprisingly (or unsurprisingly), the praxis/theory divide was one of Fedorov's key concerns. In Fedorov's thought, the preeminence accorded to brotherhood is manifest in his view of the division between men of theory and men of practice, scholars and non-scholars,<sup>4</sup> as a primary inequality that precedes all other forms of discrimination.<sup>5</sup> For Fedorov, the gap between philosophy and action is the negative abyss from which any social struggle originates. Existence of such an irreducible gap is the key reason for what he calls "non-kinship," or a "non-fraternal state" [*nerodstvennost'*] which promotes the rupture between mind and will, and leads to an inability to direct one's thinking according to the principle of the good. In other words, the gulf that separates thinking from doing, which was created throughout modernity, underlies moral blindness, social indifference, and tunnel vision. This is why Fedorov treats the primal ontological question of the foundation of our being – the philosophical question par excellence – as tautological. His inversion of the question "what is being?," which grounds death as nonbeing, makes exigent the overcoming of death, or at least a grappling with its meaning. As Fedorov puts it, "Philosophers, for whom the world is just a concept, treat it as their own creation, their property, and are proud of this, proud of the unconditional knowledge of themselves, a knowledge that recognizes neither an equal, nor a comrade."<sup>6</sup> Detached from practice, Fedorov warns, theory is dangerous – by definition ignorant of its future implications outside of the ivory tower of science. Awareness of the potential danger in detached theory compels Fedorov to develop an argument that has normative as well as political significance: any knowledge of truth that enables us to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, makes little sense if it does not become an intention to do good and eliminate that which is evil or ill. Therefore, knowledge must convert into will, and vice versa. On the other hand, Fedorov warns, action estranged from contemplation engenders three forms of pure destruction: military conscription as a part of the army system; mass production with its hard, backbreaking labor; and the market system, in which everything can be sold. The dangerous divide between thought and action determined the working regime and popular lifestyles of the industrial era: hard, monotonous, assembly-line labor is followed by scant hours of leisure filled with idle and senseless pursuits.

Education is perhaps the "official" starting point on the road to knowledge. But traditional education always implies the existence of





Constellations from Johannes Hevelius's celestial catalogue *Uranographia* (1690). Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

masters, whose authority is rigid and demands loyalty. As an advocate of intellectual emancipation and active study, Fedorov railed against the idea of a mastery that implies obedience and a noncritical acquisition of knowledge. The concept of the “organic intellectual,” developed two decades after Fedorov’s death, seems very close to his perspective on the ideal educational process. A university, in Fedorov’s words, is a “slave of industrialism” that turns any idea of a living world into a lifeless concept. Academic training is also, of course, a privileged form of education, with the academy a sanctuary for what Fedorov calls “class science.” Beyond the university, the two alternative institutional forms of education Fedorov finds compelling are the library and the museum, in which “everything must be an object of knowledge, and everybody – a subject.”<sup>7</sup>

Whether in the university, the library, the museum, or outside of these institutions, a radical divide between theory and practice is palpable in our communication and in the simple rituals of daily life. In wishing for others to be well (for example, while greeting each other: the Russian equivalent for “hello” [*zdravstvujte*] is literally a wish of good health), one rarely does anything to support this wish, believing that a verbal and “automatic” expression is enough to somehow positively affect the situation. Such a performative utterance (in J. L. Austin’s terminology, this refers to a statement that is neither descriptive nor evaluative but serves as, or is a part of, an action, such as “I promise not to lie, cheat, or steal”) is a surrogate of a real act, an excuse to remain passive. At the same time, wishing health as a mundane ritual greeting, along with many similar greetings, contains a grain of universal concern for the overall well-being of the other, even if this concern is culturally suppressed or underdeveloped. The repetitive expression of implicit care for the good of others reveals the superstitious core of our speech acts, and probably even the superstitious element within what in our secular age is called “the performative.” At the same time, this grain of universal concern indicates the compassionate content of words as “reservoirs of life experience,” and proves that everyday language itself is full of long-established empathies (in other words, philosophical language is not alone in holding empathy – nor, as will be argued by Bloch, is poetic language).<sup>8</sup> Fedorov’s maxim for conquering death, formulated as “resurrection for all,” turns out to be a practical embodiment of the common concern and collective desire for the common good, both of which seem to reside in the core of our habitual, and often formal, wishes of health to others.

The idea of resurrection also contains the struggle against an intellectual, cultural (and in the current era, possibly even digital) divide. The production of an artifact, a text, or a work of art has always been a means of conquering one’s existential fear of death. On the other hand, those who remain on the periphery of cultural production have always been bound to overcome mortality through their children. “Resurrection for all” means that individual processes of creative production are of little existential consequence: all will be saved, and all will be equally recognized and remembered.

The first gesture of resurrection, for Fedorov, was when our human ancestors stood upright, “a sentry and laborious stance” – a perpendicular position that humans developed in relation to the earth, which distinguished us from other species.<sup>9</sup> Standing upright is what once enabled human beings to observe the world from a different angle, for the first time seeing it as a whole – a planet placed between heaven and earth, between high and low. In Fedorov’s logic, an understanding of human interrelations made our species conscious of natural laws and the possibility of ameliorating life on earth (e.g., the sun shines and the rain pours from the sky, and this is what affects the soil and actualizes its fertility). It was a gesture that signified the unity of theory and practice – a symbolic beginning of what Fedorov calls “Heaven-knowledge,” or “World-knowledge.”<sup>10</sup> More importantly, standing was an act of uprising in its literal and political sense – an *insurrection* against the forces of nature.

### Spontaneity and Organization

One of the most burning issues debated in revolutionary circles – such as among socialist and labor parties – in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the balance between spontaneity and organization. Once the impetus to form and galvanize mass movement was established, the question of *how* to organize became vital for understanding political action and the creation of a relevant revolutionary strategy and tactics. In a broader sense, the debate on organization and spontaneity – that is, on the proper balance of regulated and extemporaneous resistance – can be seen as a problem of channeling solidarity, of coordinating demands according to the difficulties of the present and the varying views of a better future. Fedorov obviously stood before and apart from this discussion, and his skeptical interest in “spontaneity” [*stihijnost’*] has no relation to fostering political engagement.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, his critique, strongly determined by the etymological peculiarity of the Russian word, is suggestive for understanding the term as part of





Natalia Goncharova, *Khorovod*, 1910. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

an international political vocabulary. Spontaneity, for Fedorov, is nothing but a blind force of nature that knows nothing of itself; it is a natural potentiality that is actualized incidentally and operates until it has fully actualized itself, or when an external counterforce interferes in the process – just as a fire in a forest may be stopped either by rain or by firefighters. This is why Fedorov insists that there is no place for spontaneity in social life; it has to be placed under permanent regulation. But what does this regulation imply? What kind of subject does it presuppose? Could it not lead to the establishment of an eternal modernist dictatorship of reason?

For Fedorov, regulation begins with attention and a rational approach to the natural environment, which involve neither the exploitation of natural resources nor their preservation, but rather their control. Such a view is equally hostile to three major approaches to conceiving of our relation with nature: its ultimate subordination to the satisfaction of human needs, its ecologically responsible protection, and the neovitalist attempt to enjoy natural spontaneous forces as a part of a project of solidarity with nonhuman objects.<sup>12</sup> For Fedorov, nature is our temporary enemy that has to be made our eternal friend.<sup>13</sup>

So, regulation starts with reason, but it is, of course, different from, if not opposite to, the mythological triumph of human rationality that shaped the edifice of the Enlightenment, which has yet to be fully destroyed. Regulation means responsible creativity and active care. As we know from the patristic period and St. Augustine, flesh is originally sinful because *it is able* to sin, and sinful flesh is the main obstacle to the realization of human freedom, of positive freedom – that is, freedom *for*. This is the perspective from which Fedorov looks at nature: it is chaotic, it knows no piety, no fraternity, and is therefore far from securing freedom for humanity. In a natural environment, animals are doomed to kill and eat each other in order to survive; they do not save the weak, and they live in conditions of so-called natural selection. Fedorov's argument can be seen as an inversion of the social-Darwinist argument: the fact that there is lethal competition between different species in natural life is the key reason *why* social life has to be organized differently; it has to be regulated precisely because social life is not nature. Interestingly, with his call for resurrection for all, Fedorov was among those who pointed out the existence of a selective logic within the Christian canon, one stipulating that only the righteous will be saved. According to this logic, the Last Judgment is the moment of unprecedented and ultimate selection. But

Fedorov's refusal to accept this apocalyptic pessimism motivates his project of resurrection: *resurrection as the transfiguration of all* is counterposed to *death as salvation for the few*. Regulation is an act of support for the weak, and every human being is vulnerable and weak by definition. The most prominent examples of regulation already present in Fedorov's era included food supplies independent of immediate need, regular hygiene, and health care. Human weakness is also a source of creativity and care: if there had not been people with poor eyesight, humanity would never have invented glasses.

The state of nonregulation means that the organization, or rather disorganization, of our environment is automatically delegated – to gods and heroes, to those in power, to nature, to machinery, and to the invisible hand of the market. In order to overcome this dependency and to break its unseen chains, humanity has to establish *regulation as such* as the regulative ideal. So, any resistance based on spontaneity is illogical because it is grounded in the natural, or naturalized, order it intends to smash.

The process of regulation, in fact, is the realization of Fedorov's project of resurrection for all, and the idea of regulation can elucidate what, at least partially, this project means. When people die, their flesh, or ashes, dissolve into the matter of nature – this is the basic concept of entropy (and the reason why our bodies are just “huge hotels for atoms,” as Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, a young visitor to Fedorov's library and a future rocket scientist, would later explain<sup>14</sup>). So, our physical environment is literally made up of particles of the dead. In this regard, it is easy to see that the regulation of nature is a project of care, which starts with the recognition of the material metamorphosis that our world is built upon. Suggesting that we enhance our faculty of knowledge by means of perception, Fedorov finds it necessary to accept that history *qua* substance composed of the scattered dust of former generations can be experienced collectively; it can be lived through, or even grasped with the five senses. Yet, such an experience, which is supposed to serve as a bonding mechanism in the future, is problematic while society is torn by power struggles. These struggles impede the very project of regulation based on a universally recognized necessity to put under control the hostile impulses of nature, which represent the chaotic disintegration of matter and therefore the dissolution of history. While there is social discord, people will just imitate natural chaos instead of harmonizing the world and turning it into a human cosmos. Modern culture only fans the flames of “the war of all against all,” whether driven by the human

desire for recognition, as identified by Hobbes, or our economic egoism, as famously stressed by Marx. So, before nature and history can be made into a subject of careful regulation, *the regulators themselves have to be regulated*.

Despite his insistence on regulation, there is room for spontaneity in Fedorov's thought. Though rarely noticed, the space Fedorov leaves for spontaneity can be found in his fascination with collective gatherings and popular celebrations: choirs of singers, circle dancers, or even the liturgy that has to be performed outside of the church, embracing the whole of humanity.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the liturgy, these are all collective, carnivalesque, pantheistic rituals that have a positive effect on the life of the whole community. Regardless of Fedorov's criticism of the unreflective and archaic nature of these happenings, overall he found them much closer to the project of the common task than any expressions of industrial progress.

### On the Power of Collectivity

Of the three elements of the famous triad of revolutionary struggle – theory versus practice, spontaneity versus organization, and the power of collectivity – Fedorov explicitly discusses only the third. The only form of affiliation meaningful to his thinking is “brotherhood,” which does not merely involve blood relations.<sup>16</sup> It follows that Fedorov finds it important to understand the grounds of collectivity, as well as its power and expression. Despite his piety and loyalty to many Eastern Orthodox dogmas, he – quite heretically – finds that the individual act of praying is of little worth since it is unable to save a person from “inner disturbance.” For Fedorov, inner turmoil is always caused by the chaotic state of the social and physical environment. Moreover, an individual feeling of harmony and peace with oneself is determined by the experience of peace with others. Praying should be collective; otherwise it has no significance and no effect, whether performative or reflective.<sup>17</sup> “The Orthodox Trinity immanently points out that we are to be kept in our generic universe,” argues Fedorov; he continues by pointing to the struggle against death as the force that can unite people into a collective body of generic beings.<sup>18</sup> This is why Fedorov suggests that we start the fight for a better world from the point of an axiomatic equality in the face of our finite being, instead of from our social differences.

Although Fedorov is often portrayed as a pacifist, he accepts the significance of power. Yet for Fedorov, power is better comprehended through the notion of *potentia*, or potentiality. The concept of the kind or the good has to be matched with knowledge and power (the way they are blended in the figure of God), since the

good is not just the absence of vice, but a real force that is able to eliminate suffering and anger.<sup>19</sup> In this sense Fedorov is a quintessential modernist, in opposition to the tendencies of “weak thought” – whether understood as “weak messianism,” “weak communism,” or the like.<sup>20</sup> Fedorov's project, if not entirely convincing, is strong, determined, and uncompromising. His understanding of power, paradoxically, is based on a materialist ontology and a pantheistic worldview; he writes that even if everyone on earth follows the Christian commandments, fire will still burn and water will still flow.<sup>21</sup> Yet, this naturally given, ontological order has to be subverted, and blind power somehow extracted, understood, and transformed into a constructive force for the sake of the whole universe. Only if humanity follows the path of the most radical change and carries out the common task of resurrection for all will “life on earth extend to the limits of nature, since nature itself, recognizing the lack of its own freedom, will pass through us, turning into a world of free, infinite personalities.”<sup>22</sup>

### History: Fidelity or Eradication?

The concept of revolution has a very peculiar relationship to the concept of history. On one hand, revolution is the ultimate example of a formative historical event; on the other, it signifies a rupture with history. On one hand, it insists on fidelity to history – both in the sense of the active creation of it, and in the sense of returning to the moment of the constitution of order. On the other, it can also be seen as the eradication of history. However contradictory, both visions of history are present in Fedorov's thought. Fedorov is very explicit on the point that fidelity to history, as well as fidelity in general, has little to do with religious faith. He distinguishes between the words “faithful” [*vernij*] and “religious” [*veruyushii*], which have the same root in Russian.<sup>23</sup> “The faithful one cannot help being a believer” because the faithful one acts according to that which he or she believes, which is not necessarily the case with a religious person. A faithful action is penetrated by love for the object of faith; it is more than a subject of action; and such faithfulness can probably be better grasped as a relation with the concept of truth.

But how can one be faithful to history? For Fedorov, this necessarily presupposes a truth procedure, and starts with the correct comprehension of what history is. Thus, national history, for example, is nothing but a symptom of division and a manifestation of national vanity; history is and can be conceived only as universal, and cannot become real so long as there are wars and power struggles. According to Fedorov,

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history is often seen as a reservoir of cases and proofs to be used in a manipulative manner in pamphlets. Another way to present history is as a “novel about the past,” or as a combination of narratives.<sup>24</sup> This is a recreation of the past in words, not in deeds. Historical thinking, as we know, is a product of understanding history as a teleological process, a timeline that constantly demarcates our past from our future. Fedorov objects to this approach, as it is based on an idea of progress that eliminates or overcomes the past for the sake of the future. On one hand, he offers quite a conservative vision, one that implies an ultimate turn to the past instead of a view towards the future. On the other, he seems to show that the past and future are always already blended in the present, and our desire to isolate history in moments that are left behind is simply anti-historical. In addition, Fedorov emphasizes the division between scientific and “commonsense” attitudes to history. The former, which is “the history of historians,” is an image, a concept, a scholarly thought that has been used in the development of the theoretical apparatus of historical science. The latter consists of a number of emotional outbursts and sentimental (or even sacramental) attitudes towards the past, expressed in regular memories and habitual rituals of commemoration. Whereas one is the rationalized cult of heroes and events, “a fact,” “a judgment, a verdict” (or “a slaughter-bench,” to put it in Hegel’s words), the other is a “cult of the dead,” exercised intuitively and without prompting reflection upon its objective meaning.<sup>25</sup> This gap between two modes of operation of the past – the theoretical and the practical – has to be narrowed, and these modes have to be integrated into one another in order to see and make a different, *active*, and *perceivable* history as an expression of collective will. What is particularly interesting in today’s context is that Fedorov contrasted “history as science,” which he despised, to “history as art,” since the “transfigurative, regulative capability of art” renders it a mode of action, a creative element of our *vita activa*.

For Fedorov, everyone participates in making history, but this participation is rendered as a struggle for self-reproduction, devastation, and war. Fidelity to history implies a different idea of participation, and this is where Fedorov’s argument becomes really confusing. Although he condemns any progressivist fascination with the future, he – paradoxically – calls for universal projective thinking, since, in his view, “a project is a bridge from subject to object.”<sup>26</sup> What does this mean, and how is it possible to think of a *project* without a future *projection*? This enigma can be unraveled by comprehending the synthetic nature of any moment in history. Even

though historical thinking, a vestige of modernity, is bound to its negation of the past, this negation is unable to eliminate the presence of the past – both physically and symbolically. The past is already always integrated into the project of the future, as well as into the actual future itself. Being aware of this, Fedorov offers to set the clock backwards and suggests making the past the one and only project that is to be carried out in any period that is to come. It is impossible to be faithful to history, if this history runs off like water, or decomposes like ashes in the soil. But if humans fully turn back from the forthcoming towards the past, if we make an attempt to discover our future in the past, we can perhaps reverse the modernist logic of “deadly” history. So it is not the past that has to be sacrificed for the future, but rather the idea of progress that has to be abandoned, and the image of the future dissolved in the creative work of memory. This does not mean that technological development has to stop; rather, it means that there will be no accelerated production – only distribution, control, and care. History, then, is neither a collection of facts, nor a narrative, but a project, and an ongoing action. To use a metaphor from Fedorov’s era, we could describe this project as the building of a world library (and of course, Fedorov himself was a librarian) – yet nowadays it is difficult to think of libraries outside of the global system of production and digital capitalism. While Fedorov would probably have liked to turn factories into libraries and museums, we have witnessed an opposite transformation: libraries and museums are turning into factories of objects, statements, and affects. At the same time, Fedorov was not satisfied with a “superstructural” view of history. History is to be found in successive scientific inventions expressing a cumulative trans-generational experience. Furthermore, history has to be physically co-opted as a substance via the material transfiguration of the human, where bodily organs become the tools needed to change external conditions – that is, the conditions of the universe.<sup>27</sup>

Ending this exploratory journey into Fedorov’s ideas, it is worth coming back to our point of departure, that is, to revolution and its subjects. The whole thrust of Fedorov’s revolutionary project was to shift our perspective from creation to recreation, which was justified both ontologically (everything comes from one and the same matter) and ethically (we must be responsible for the deceased who gave life to us and enable us to sustain our being). Like recreation, revolution itself contains a repetitive moment: it implies a movement of returning to something – at least to the moment of an ultimate reconfiguration of all relations before a

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new sociopolitical order is established, a moment of both *rescission* and *reconstitution*, a burst of *destituent* and *constituent* powers with which any radical project is imbued. Any call for change inherits this ambiguity, inviting to us recreate the collective assumption that, inasmuch as the universe is able to materially reconfigure itself, an alternative life is possible. One of Fedorov's theses was that the power of the social exceeds the forces of nature, which is why the latter can be revolutionized for the sake of the former. Today, his social critique prompts a different, if not inverse, conclusion: that our social life, no less than the human itself, awaits its material transfiguration. As Blanqui would probably add, precisely since "the future of our Earth, like its past, will change course millions of times," new choices can be made and radical actions taken: "Fatality has no place in the infinite, which knows nothing of alternatives and has room for everything."<sup>28</sup> After all, the universe is full of open potentialities and can neither be separated from, nor reduced to, the immanence of the global world.

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- 1  
Louis-Auguste Blanqui, "VII. Analysis and Synthesis of the Universe," in *Eternity by the Stars* (1872), trans. Philippe Le Goff, Peter Hallward, and Mitchell Abidor, Blanqui Archive.
- 2  
Frank Chouraqui, "At the Crossroads of History: Blanqui at the Castle of the Bull," introduction to Louis-Auguste Blanqui, *Eternity by the Stars*, trans. Frank Chouraqui (New York: Contramedium Press, 2013), 7.
- 3  
Ibid.
- 4  
In Russian, the word "scientist" or "scholar" (*uchyonii*) has an antonym that literally means "uneducated" (*neuchenii*). Fedorov deploys this opposition when he distinguishes between "men of science" and "the rest."
- 5  
Nikolai Fedorov, *N. F. Fedorov: Sobranie sochinenij v chetyreh tomah, tom 1* (Collected works in four volumes, vol. 1) (Moscow: Progress, 1995), 42.
- 6  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 1, 107.
- 7  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 3, 229.
- 8  
Bloch mainly refers to the emotional meaning of metaphoric adjectives used in habitual descriptions of the human environment, such as "the wind *moans*." Ernst Bloch, *A Philosophy of The Future* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 24.
- 9  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 1, 114.
- 10  
Constructed similarly to self-knowledge, "Heaven-knowledge" (or "Sky-knowledge," (*Nebo-poznanie*)) means getting to know "things above" (i.e., the Absolute, the cosmos, or simply what is yet beyond reason), while "World-knowledge" (*Miro-poznanie*) means getting to know physical and social reality. It is quite striking that, given Fedorov's religious views, his usage of these words indicates that, for him, these two kinds of knowledge – knowing the transcendent and knowing the immanent – signify one and the same process.
- 11  
The Russian term *stihijnost'* originates from the word that signifies an elemental force of nature (*stihija*) – an outer force which is wild, violent, and almost impossible to control.
- 12  
See, for example, Timothy Morton, *Humankind: Solidarity*
- with *Non-Human People* (London: Verso, 2017).
- 13  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 1, 393.
- 14  
Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, *Prikluchenia atoma* (Adventures of the atom) (Moscow: Luch, 2009), 18.
- 15  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 3, 297.
- 16  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 1, 249.
- 17  
For instance, Fedorov finds the pagan rural custom of circle dancing (*khoro vod*) to be an example of "live, active religion," in contrast to "dead" rituals such as individual praying or church services. It is worth noting that the origin of the peasants' circle dance – the ritual worship of the sun – is what makes Fedorov see the element of collective hope for a collective impact on the forces of nature.
- 18  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 1, 102.
- 19  
Ibid., 110.
- 20  
The most developed theory of "weak thought" can be found in the work of Gianni Vattimo, based on his version of the hermeneutic method. See, for example, Gianni Vattimo and Santiago Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism: From Heidegger to Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
- 21  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 1, 110.
- 22  
Ibid, 111.
- 23  
Ibid, 132.
- 24  
Ibid, 136.
- 25  
Ibid., 146.
- 26  
Fedorov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, vol. 3, 285.
- 27  
Nikolai Fedorov, *Sochinenia* (Works) (Moscow: Mysl', 1982), 405.
- 28  
Blanqui, "VII. Analysis and Synthesis of the Universe."

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